

**OPENING STATEMENT OF REP. EDWARD J. MARKEY (D-MA)**  
**MEETING OF HOUSE AND SENATE CONFEREES**  
**ON THE ENERGY BILL**  
**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2003**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

This is a piece of legislation that began its life in secret, behind closed doors, with the Cheney Task Force meeting with lobbyists from the oil, gas, coal, nuclear and utilities industries to craft a smorgasbord of special interest provisions. From what I just heard the Chairman of the Senate Energy Committee say was his plan for the conference, we are going to abandon the more open and transparent conference process pursued during most of last year's conference – pursued, that is, until the final days of last year's conference when the Minority on this side was kicked out of the room.

What I am hearing here today is that the Republican Majority is going to trigger and immediate "blackout" of the energy conference after this initial meeting. What does that mean? Does that mean that we're going to adopt the Cheney Task Force approach of secret meetings in which the energy lobbyists, but not the public, get to participate? I certainly hope not.

I would suggest that the reason for the failure of last year's energy conference to produce a final bill was not the process but the substantive disagreements between the House and the Senate. The bill died due to the insistence of the White House and the Republican Leadership on adding radical and controversial proposals to this bill that would open the pristine Arctic Refuge and other special lands to oil and gas exploration, to provide billions in unnecessary tax breaks, royalty holidays, and other special favors to the industry, and the failure of the White House and the Republican Leadership to reach out to craft a truly bipartisan energy bill that strikes the proper balance between production incentives and improved energy efficiency.

There is a rumor afoot that we are going to muddy the waters by adding the President's Clear Skies proposal to the Energy bill. In light of the damage that this Orwellian-named proposal is estimated to cause to the lungs of our children, I am not surprised that the President has decided it would be an embarrassment to bring it to the floor on its own. Nevertheless, it would be a gross abuse if the majority attempts to expand the energy bill with such controversial proposals that neither the House nor the Senate have considered.

So, as we begin this conference, I want to ensure that the policies embodied in any legislation we send to the President represent the course we really want to take as a nation over the next ten to fifteen years – on drilling for oil and gas in the pristine Arctic Wildlife Refuge and other special public lands, on vehicle fuel economy, on appliance efficiency standards, on tax credits for energy production or efficiency, and on federal energy management. I want to learn more from our Senate colleagues about what approaches they have taken to these issues, so that we can determine whether there are

ways we can come together on a national energy policy that would strike the proper balance and not be so tilted towards the big energy companies. We should try to seek a fair balance between the interests of consumers and producers, between the need for new production and preservation of our natural environment. We should take advantage of America's strength – our technological superiority – and not play to our weakness (the fact that we control only 3% of the world's oil reserves, while OPEC controls more than 70%).

According to a recent Department of Transportation report, for the first time in our history, American's own more cars than there are licensed drivers, and yet this energy bill does nothing to address the fuel efficiency of cars. Instead the House version turns to the false hope of drilling in the Arctic Refuge, ignoring that the United State's 3 percent of world oil reserves will never match our 25 percent of world oil consumption. For some fuzzy math, we would sacrifice the last great wilderness in America, an area biologically unique within the American Arctic.

There is a better way. We are the country that invented the Internet and mapped the human genome. We can and should use America's number one competitive advantage – our technology – to solve our future energy needs in an environmentally sustainable fashion.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for calling today's meeting. I look forward to working with you, with the distinguished Ranking Member of the Energy and Commerce Committee (Mr. Dingell), and with our Senate colleagues as we undertake the difficult task of trying to resolve the many differences between these two bills.